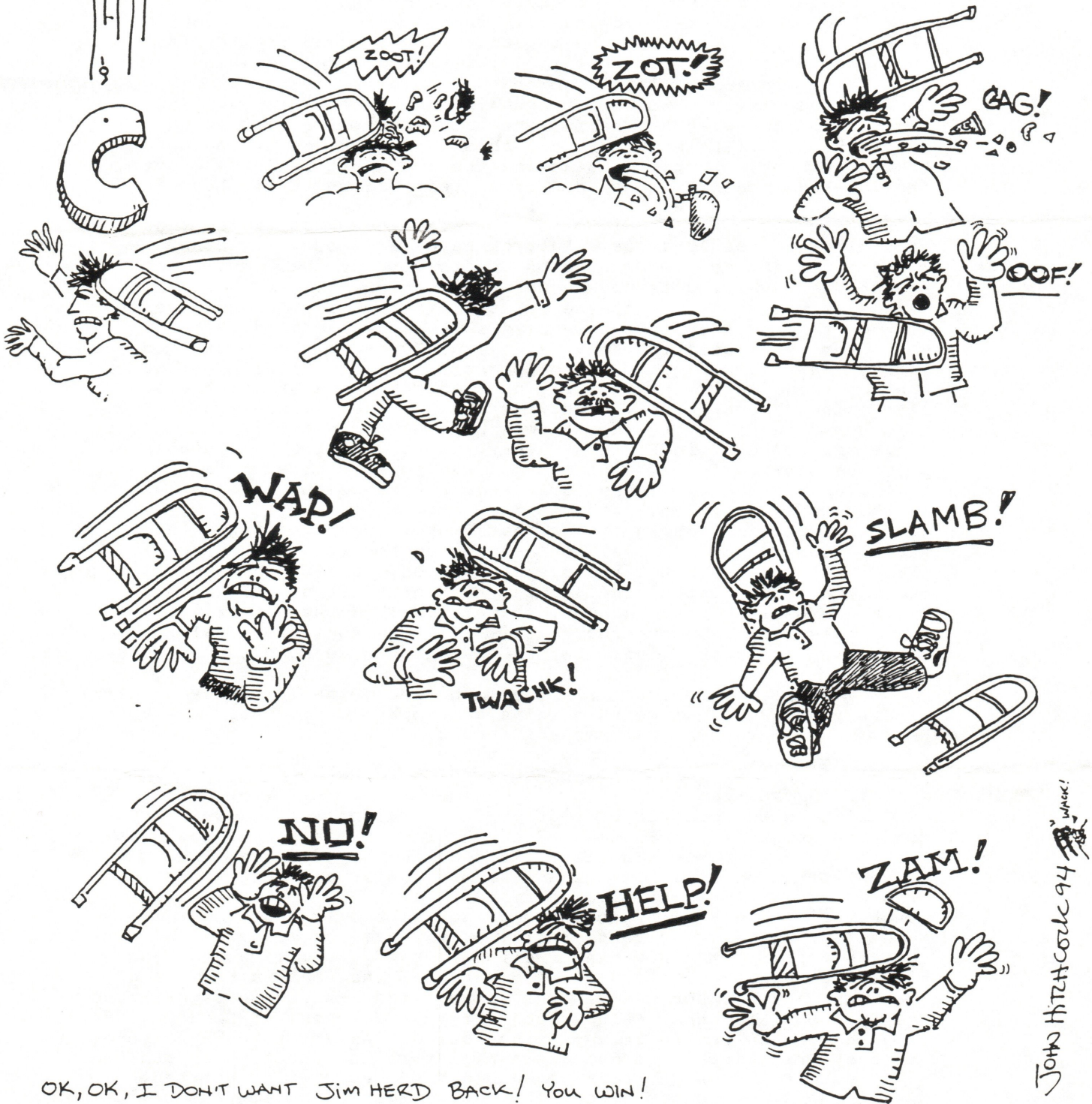
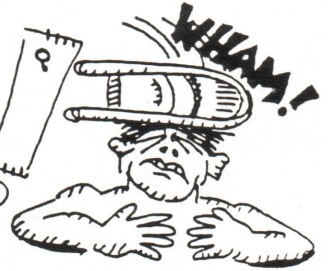


CHAIRSHOTS!

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\$1.00 CHEAP!



OK, OK, I DON'T WANT JIM HERD BACK! YOU WIN!

NEW ADDRESS!!
BARRY ROSE, 10117 W. OAKLAND PARK BLVD.,
#341 SUNRISE, FL 33351

JOHN HITCHCOCK 94



SHOOTKICK

by Jeff Bowdren

I'll skip the traditional Shootkick this month in favor of some random commentary that I'm sure you've been dieing to hear. Maybe its just that no one annoyed me enough this month.

I love "Thunder in Paradise". Should I feel guilty about this? Probably, for the same reason I like to read the Enquirer and like to watch Beverly Hills 90210. Trashy, delightfully trashy. There can be little doubt that this may be the worst show on television. No wait, maybe in the history of t.v., which if your familiar with the term "vast wasteland", is quite a statement. Still, in my opinion, this show is a hoot. Let's take a look at the brilliant acting the show features. How about the internationally famous "son of a great actor", Chris Lemmon, as "Bru". Besides being forced to carry the burden of a relentlessly stupid nickname, Lemmon displays for all to see that in the fine tradition of Desi Arnaz Jr., Patrick Wayne and countless other movie brats who developed none of the talents of their more famous parents, that acting is not necessarily an inherited trait. Which by no means is to say that the Hulkster is becoming the next DeNiro. No, don't worry fans, the good news is that as an actor, Hogan is no better in syndication than he was on NBC the night he uttered the famous line...."How much for the plastic surgery, Million Dollar Man?" Another thing about this lovably nutty show is the fact there is little if any continuity. One week the Hulkster is getting married to a woman he hates, the next week she's been conviently bumped off "in a car accident in England". Hey, who the hell cares about previous plots? Its like watching a bad episode of Memphis wrestling. Still, as Joe Bob would say, grab a couple of beers, catch a buzz, laugh hysterically and....check it out....

Am I the only one noticing that Smokey Mountain is getting a tad schizophrenic? I mean, how can a promotion that gives you those state of the art Thrillseekers videos, the loser leaves town tag match, Bob & Dutch, and all the rest of their stuff, give us a slug like Mike Furnas as t.v. champ? UGH! I thought Prince Kharis was bad, but compared to this guy, he looks practically revolutionary in the ring. Let us examine the reasons for this guy's push.

1) He played football for the Tennessee Volunteers-Oh yeah, like twelve years ago. Since then, he's been playing football "in Italy". Well, we all know what a mecca of football Italy is and how many Hall of Famers began their careers there. The bottom line is that he was a stiff as a football player and he looks like just as big a stiff in the ring.

2) He's the brother of bigtime-international-legend-well-known draw-at-the-gate Doug Furnas. See, the reason Mike apparently got the job is that Doug is still a big deal in Knoxville, not because he went to Tennessee, but because he obviously was a big enough draw in Knoxville in his legendary feud (in 1986 or so) with the now Reverend Buddy "I swear I'm born again, really I do, hey, I mean it you guys, I've found religion, why are you laughing? I'm serious here! I'm a new man! Well, at least until I can get another booking somewhere..." Landel. I'm sure all the fans in Knoxville that live anywhere but at Tim Whitehead's address remember that feud and the promotion that folded soon afterwards. Hey, if Smokey Mountain is going to use the relative in the business excuse to push someone, at least Erik Watts' old man was a big star. And hell, compared to old Stumblefoot Furnas, Erik was a great worker when he started.

3) He's got photos of someone. (This would explain a lot.)

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4) Heath Shuler wasn't available. When all is said and done, this may be the real reason that Mike Furnas was the one who got the job.

Hey, seriously folks, I've really got nothing against Mike Furnas, I'm sure behind his stumbling, bumbling and jumbling of interviews, he's probably a decent enough guy. Unfortunately the promotion has put him in a position to be subject to a closer critique. I realize that part of the storyline behind Mike's t.v. title reign is that he manages to "luck" into seemingly every victory. But the fact remains, and here's what I think is the one thing that no one else has bothered to mention, is that this is exactly the sort of angle that Jim Cornette would bitch and moan about while he was with WCW. Can someone explain to me the basic difference between the Ding-Dongs and Prince Kharis? (I mean besides the fact that Daryle Van Horn does funny interviews) What about El Gigante & Mike Furnas? It seems to me that a lot of people out there in the sheets who ripped holy hell out of Jim Herd a few years back, and rightfully so I might add, don't seem want to call Smokey Mountain out onto the carpet whenever they pull out a stinker of an angle. However, to be fair and probably also because I'm probably sort of an ass-kisser, it's still the t.v. show I look most forward to seeing on tape, and if the Thrillseekers don't get over, it sure the hell won't be because the promotion didn't push them hard enough.

And finally, needless to say, a BIG thumbs up for WCW's latest PPV effort. How good was it? I wouldn't have felt bad about paying for it. And it's been about 5 years since I could realistically say that. This was the best PPV I've seen since the '89 BASH. The tag match set new standards for brutality in the U.S. and was my personal highlight of the evening, as I counted myself saying "Holy Shit!" at least 7 or 8 times-Vader & Boss also had its share of brutality and Dustin Rhodes carried Jimmy Golden to the greatest match of his life-hell, the worst match in my opinion was Austin & Muta, and they even had a couple of moves that you jumped out of your seat about! Even Page & Badd worked their asses off-you realize it was a great PPV when you consider that we haven't even mentioned Flair & Steamboat yet-another great match for the feud's resume', but it almost struck me as the same old match. It was clearly an example of a match that was just unable to meet the level that I had set for it ahead of time. Which isn't to fault the two wrestlers, because I'm not sure anyone could've reached the level I had established for them in my mind. That and that goofy ending, which really left a sour taste in my mouth after a highly enjoyable evening. Would it have really killed Steamboat's heat to have Flair have lifted his shoulder? It would've ended the show on a clean pin, instead of a screwjob, which I thought would've been fitting since this was their 1st card in the post-Rhodes era. But hey, I'll think about and try and decide whether or not they've merely given me fodder for next issue's column.

In closing, a quick story from the viewing of the PPV. During the main event, I'm watching the show with Greg Goode, who some of you may know as a wrestling fan for over 20 years. We're busy debating the various scenarios around which the promotion would either give the strap to Steamboat for a surprise, or keep it on Flair. We were getting into the match, when they went to the finish. While the announcers are trying to figure out what's happening in the ring, Greg jumps up and says, "Hey, they have to give Steamboat the belt-he was clearly in control!" He then looked at me and says, "What in the hell am I saying?" Yessir, the old suspension of disbelief

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SMOKY MOUNTAIN HOTSPOTS

BY TIM WHITEHEAD

riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and. . . Hold it! That's Finnegans Wake, not Smoky Mountain Hotspots™! Let's try it again. . .

Scanning the geography of the U.S. wrestling scene yields quite a wasteland. Okay, to be honest, WCW seems to be improving and both of the last major pay-per-views (WCW's Spring Stampede & WWF's WrestleMania) were very good. But business-wise it's still nothing like yesteryear when there were around 25 thriving regional promotions dotting the landscape. Not that long ago nearly everyone was writing the traditional territorial promotion off as a relic of past civilizations but very quietly the territory has made a small comeback. Memphis is still around, ECW has arisen, and then there's the most successful revival of them all, Smoky Mountain Wrestling. SMW now runs a regular circuit of house shows, with regular stops such as Knoxville and Johnson City and several spot shows per month. Attendance rises and falls but it seems as if each peak is a little higher than before while the valleys grow consistently more shallow. The TV show draws excellent ratings in the key markets. So what has been the secret of Smoky Mountain's success?

Aside from the obvious factors (i.e., sensible booking, very few no-shows, etc.) the main reason for the good showing SMW has made thus far is Jim Cornette's decision to launch his promotion with well-known local names and then to gradually phase in wrestlers with excellent workrates but no name recognition. Many of the new promotions to spring up in recent years have went bankrupt trying to load up their shows with big name talent such as Road Warrior Hawk. In today's wrestling climate, a new promotion simply can't draw well enough to afford the payoffs demanded by such talent. Other groups have went too far in the other direction by featuring only unknown talent. This doesn't work either because no matter how good the guys work very few people are going to pay to see names they don't at least recognize. Cornette was fortunate to start SMW in an area where there were plenty of established "local legends" who were very well known to the fans but not major national stars who would demand huge payoffs. Thus, SMW began operations two years ago with a roster composed of Tom Prichard, Stan Lane, the Fantastics, Dirty White Boy, Ron Wright, Dutch Mantell, the Armstrongs, Robert Gibson, Brian Lee, Jimmy Golden, and a few others. Some of these wrestlers, such as Lane, Gibson, and Orndorff, had at one time been major stars in the big leagues but were thought to be past their prime (erroneously as it turned out). But most of them were names which had been around for years in the southern territories. Good-to-excellent workers in many cases, but for one reason or another they had never hit the big time. By starting out with this roster, Cornette was able to deliver wrestlers the fans knew while avoiding the astronomical payoffs. As SMW has grown, less-known talent has been added to the roster slowly, giving the fans time to get used to them and to recognize their abilities. Extremely talented wrestlers such as Chris Candido and Jimmy Del Ray are phased in in such a way that the fans learn of their skills on their own, without having them forced down the fans' throats by a promotion which is unwilling to take its time. Throw into this mix an occasional big international star, such as Terry Funk, brought in from time to time as an added attraction on a big show, and you have a recipe for success. Maybe the U.S. wrestling scene isn't such a wasteland after all!

The SMW Tag Titles changed hands at the 4/23 card at Johnson City's Freedom Hall before a modest sized but diverse crowd ranging from tiny rug rats (and not-so-tiny ring rats) right up to huge individuals weighing, as Lord Steven Regal would say, quite a few stone. There was one guy there who was really huge. I mean, if this guy were in outer space, he'd have so much gravity he'd probably develop into a new planet. Anyway, the Rock & Roll Express lost the belts to Brian Lee & Chris Candido after Rick Morton, who was wrestling with an "injury" (as opposed to an injury) was pinned after his "injured" neck was dropped over the top rope. Morton had earlier defeated Candido in a singles match but afterward Candido piledrived Morton after Tammy Fytch sprayed him in the eyes with perfume. And before that the fans had voted (with a little guidance from SMW officials) for the Morton vs. Candido match as part of a "fans select the match" gimmick. All these events occurred in the exact order described, since they wouldn't have made sense in any other order. Got it?

Assorted observations: Others have already said this but the scene where Cornette said goodbye to the Heavenly Bodies after their "Loser Leaves SMW" loss to the Rock & Rolls in Pikeville was one of those rare classic scenes in wrestling. Bruiser Bedlam has debuted as Cornette's new wrestler. It remains to be seen whether a union thug can make it as a heel in this region. In some ways, the gimmick seems more suited to an ethnic ward up north. On the other hand, crossing a United Mine Workers picket line down here can get your head blown off. Dutch Mantell is no longer color commentating on SMW TV, but his presence is still being felt since he's sending in tapes from "South America" (Puerto Rico actually) where he's hiding out from the vicious hoodlums who forced him to flee the mainland. The angle they're running with Brian Lee & Chris Candido is side-splitting. Candido is hilarious doing the two-faced manipulator gimmick.

I'm running out of space again, so see ya next issue! And get well soon, Barry!

FOREIGN AFFAIRS by Dave Scherer

ECW had another wild and woolly show at the Arena/Bingo Parlor on 4/16. The high point, as is often the case, was when The Bruise Brothers destroyed Mr. Chews, er Hughes, and he was unable to wrestle the God of Graps, Terry Funk, in the main event. Funk, being the Deity of Destruction that he is, took the house mic and said he came here to wrestle, and dammit, he wanted to wrestle. This started yet another round of "we're not worthy" arm signals amongst the crowd. So, of course, Paul E. comes out and tells our Lord of the Ring he has an opponent for him. As I had predicted earlier in the evening to my section, it was Sabu. The match itself was fantastic, which anymore goes without saying, but what happened at the end was one of the most exciting things I have ever seen at a wrestling show. It ended up that one of Sabu's masked handlers was Bobby Eaton, who interjected himself into the match at the end and then pulled off the hood. The crowd was stunned at first, until they realized who it was and then they popped huge. As the two of them ganged up on the prone Funk, we looked to the entrance to see who would make the save. I would bet that no one in the Arena thought it would be who it was, Arn Anderson. This sets up May 14th with the teams facing each other in what should be a fantastic match, one that our editor, Barryfoot in the Park Rose would have gotten to see live had he looked before he leapt and kept his foot in working order. I am told that tix are going fast and that all interested in coming in better get their seats early. I can not stress enough how fantastic the ending of this match was. One of the great things about being a graps fan is being thrown a curve, being surprised. There were a few "smart" fans sitting behind me practically reciting that week's Observer. I really pitied them and wondered why they even bothered coming. Knowing "everything" has always ruined shows for me. Being surprised, and thus entertained, on the other hand has made them. They aired the entire scenario on TV this week so if you have access to it, by all means get it...I talked to some of my Japanese pals and they disagreed with Dave Meltzer's assessment that Tatsumi Fujinami is not as over with the fans as a legend should be. I agree with them too. Longtime hardcore fans in Japan view Fujinami as the man who revolutionized the Junior Heavyweight division. I think that he has been misused and therefore appears to not be as over as he should...I saw the first of the All Japan shows since it was cut to 30 minutes. It reminded me of my old dog. She had an operation on her ear and the vet placed a black bucket with bottom cut out onto her collar so she could not scratch her wound. She looked pathetic. The same can be said of the once proud All Japan, now show cut in half. I would rather see them go to airing an hour every other week...If anyone hasn't see it, the SMW show that aired the highlights from the 4/1 Bluegrass Brawl was some of the best TV wrestling I have ever seen. Not the match, which they only showed a clip of, but the Bodies actually leaving at the end. Powerful stuff from a true wrestling genius...Is there a more annoying manager, and not in a good way, around today than Ronnie Lottz in the USWA? I see untalented dicks like him and wonder who he has naked pictures of, and what exactly they are doing in the them. He has no charisma at all and is a perfect excuse to take a leak anytime he gets airtime...Latest American celebrity to appear on a Japanese commercial? None other than Eddie "I was funny as hell until I started taking myself seriously" Murphy doing a "Beans" iced coffee commercial. He better hope that one never airs in the states...I was really sorry to see that Ron Lemieux was joining the ranks of the well adjusted and dropping his column in this fine publication. I always liked Ron's stuff. If the only reason you are leaving is because you can't break news anymore, c'mon back Ron. This sheet is more about reflections than actual news, and it will stay that way as long as Barry "Softball Sid" Rose keeps giving a Tuesday deadline and then not publishing until the following Monday. heh heh...I heard a rumor that Mike Lano is starting a sheet. Really. The guy who told me said that it has been billed as the best sheet ever. I'm curious to see that puppy... Watched Spring Stampede, via 2 day Priority Mail delay, and thought that overall it was a good show. I really enjoyed when Bobby Heenan did straight commentary instead of one liners. I thought his insights, when he was being serious, were fantastic. Don't get me wrong here. I love his comedy too, but it was nice to see a more serious approach during something, in theory, I paid for. I was also a little disappointed in Muta's match with Austin, though I heard that they were told to slow it down so that the crowd didn't get burnt out before the main event. What is the point of bringing in a guy from Japan and then not having him use his full arsenal? Then again, there are times in Japan where he does very little also. Flair's match again showed me that he is a stale talent, especially when you compare him to Terry Funk who has continued to update his style as he ages. Sure, Flair's match was good, but I have seen that same match too many times now. And as I said last month, I don't want to watch Cactus Jack anymore. Sure the tag match was great, but how much are people going to enjoy watching Cactus cripple himself taking one of his insanely stupid bumps? He does not need to do that crap to make the fans feel they are getting their money's worth. Same can be said for Sabu's post match assault on ringside tables. Both of these guys have established themselves. They don't need to keep taking stupid chances like they do...My satellite guide for this week only shows the 2 hour Saturday night show listed for this week. Hmmm...The whole Missy Hyatt flap? Who cares. Howard Stern summed it up perfectly when he said, if they didn't fire her, would this broad be suing them? We all know that answer to that...There may not be a better tag team in the world than Love Machine (Art Barr) and Eddy Guerrero. I love watching these guys as they never take a night off and are super talented. On this week's AAA TV show, they continued the Machine/Eddy turn on Blue Panther. At the end of this week's main event, they again fought. Panther went to the back and came out with recently turned Misterioso, which I assume sets up a feud between the two teams. Misterioso and Panther will be the fan favorites in this feud though, since they are the "native Mexicanos," ignoring that fact that Guerrero is Mexican also. I found the choice of Misterioso as Panther's partner odd, given that he just turned rudo, but somehow, in Mexico it all must make sense...For those curious, John Clark's Wrestling Flyer hit my mailbox this week...Chris Benoit won the one night New Japan J-Cup tournament on 4/16. I was told the match of the show was Michinoku Pro's Great Sasuke vs Jushin Liger in the semis. I have no problem believing that...The same night was also the final of this year's All Japan Carnival tournament, won by Toshiaki Kawada over Steve Williams, in what Katuyuki described as "the best match. The best." Can't wait to see it...Bought the UWFI PPV show and while I thought it was an overall good show, it pales in comparison to the Pancrase shows that I have seen. Gary Albright and Nobuhiko Takada seem destined to meet again...Holyfield knocks Mooror down and the round's still scored even. And they say wrestling's fixed...Until next time...

The '90s Should Belong to Steve Austin and Brian Pillman

Jeffrey Cohen

Let's be realistic here. After all, Dusty Rhodes isn't in the room, so we can safely ignore the fantasy of Dustin "the Natural" Rhodes being a long-term choice as WCW Champion. As realists, we have to assess the current market conditions and determine who should be the standard bearers in grappling.

- Brawling? Cactus Jack and Sabu are willing to slice, dice, and pureé themselves to a fine broth.
- High-flying? Stick with the Japanese or Mexicans, but they aren't going to work in this country long-term.
- Exciting main events that tell a story and vary from opponent to opponent – *under the age of 40?* Gee, you've got me there.

An awesome gap exists right now in wrestling. The WWF has a lock on two performers who are clearly at the top of their game right now and can have (as Meltzer once said of Ric Flair) "a three-star match with a broom." One of them is Shawn Michaels, who apparently wields enough clout to take a couple of months off to "manage" Diesel until the big goof turns. The other is Bret Hart, and Vince "Nailz" McMahon had enough common sense to slap the WWF World Championship around the Hitman's waist for the second time this spring.

As far as the rest of the herd in Titan, I never consciously spent money to see Yokozuna, Razor Ramon, Bam Bam Bigelow, or Lex Luger. Curt "Mr. Perfect Back Pain" Hennig hasn't had a high-calibre match in years. The 1-2-3 Kid isn't going to get main events. The last WWF card I scrambled to get tickets for was Bret Hart vs. Ric Flair at the Nassau Coliseum, and it was great.

The rest of the WWF talent bin is just that – very similar to a bargain basement. Jeff Jarrett is a skinnier, less charismatic Honky Tonk Man. Sparky Plugg doesn't cut it. Dumpster Droese? *Sheesh!* Someday soon, the Undertaker will stalk back into the Fed. Fans will cheer, but this doesn't mean the lummoX will perform any better.

Believe it or not, WCW has the more solid talent base right now. Dustin Rhodes can do some decent brawling mixed with high spots. Steve Regal is a good technical wrestler, although Bill Dundee blows as a manager. They do have some hysterical byplay during interviews, though. Vader and Sting should never, *ever* fight in a main event again (which means they probably will). But both guys are doing fine in their matchwork. Rick Rude? Okay, the less said, the better.

Ric Flair? He looks about 80 years old. Remember when he was booking himself as a headliner four years ago and everyone pointed out how it was aging him? I don't pity Flair if he actually books matches where he gets pinned by Hogan around the country. Ric would be doing it to himself, for the good of a company that mistreated and abused him, and destroyed his credibility whenever it could.

Flair has helped WCW in destroying Ric Flair, the wrestler. Why couldn't the World champion beat Regal, a midcard heel, on a Saturday program? Didn't the Patriot do that? A *masked* guy who flies in for tapings every couple of months? What about the main event of *Spring Stampede*, where Flair couldn't even book the old "three-shoulders-down finish" to get a clean decision versus Rick Steamboat, hardly a top-notch box office draw this decade? Oh yeah... he wanted to use the PPV as a lure for better Saturday ratings.

Yeah, the talent pool is fine there. But I left out two performers who have blossomed while in WCW. One has been there for four years, the other for two. Both have held

numerous titles, separately and together. Both are in their 20s, and have unlimited potential for the future. And both recently shocked most 'cores by resigning with WCW for two year stints.

Brian Pillman was the prototypical clean-cut babyface. His entrance was carbon-copied two years ago by Mark Bagwell, who just didn't get over until he was teamed with the infinitely more-talented 2 Cold "Future WWF Tag Champ" Scorpio. Pillman held the U.S. tag belts with Tom Zenk, in an unlikely pairing thrown together (like Scorpio and Bagwell) that the promotion was unprepared for. The Midnight Express feud was classic, but then they were torn apart. Pillman went on to become the first Lighthweight Champion, and then turned heel for the tag team belts with Steve Austin, the former two-time TV champ.

Austin was trained by Chris Adams in Texas. Real name Steve Williams, everyone was skeptical when he joined WCW. Ninety percent of his matches had been against Adams, his trainer, and no one thought he could do it on his own. In fact, he blew away his critics and was hailed early on as "the next Flair."

Someday soon, the Undertaker will stalk back into the Fed. Fans will cheer, but this doesn't mean the lummoX will perform any better.

Steve Austin and Brian Pillman have gone through their fair share of abuse in WCW. Who can forget Pillman losing to Johnny Flamingo at *Beach Blast*, or going to the hospital after two Sid Vicious power bombs after the War Games? What about Austin lying down for Arn Anderson when the Four Horsemen gimmick was brought back for – what was it, *six* weeks? Not to mention that four-star encounter with P.N. News.

Yet neither of these guys has hit their stride, or been thrust into the spotlight for main events. In 1990, when Ric Flair announced the beginning a new era, WCW chose Brian Pillman to put Ric over on *WCW Saturday Night*. It turned into a match of the year contender because both men worked their asses off. But less than a year later, Pillman was pulled out of a *Clash* main event rematch and Scott Steiner replaced him. The match was inferior, and there was no finish. Brian would have done the job, and I'll bet the match would have been remembered 10 times more fondly than the Scott-Ric encounter that occurred. I recall Scott "accidentally" throwing himself over the top rope.

Now, hopefully both will be given their due. I could sense something was in the works when neither took a pinfall at *Spring Stampede*. Pillman isn't booked on the *Slamboree* card, and Austin is programmed with midcard talent Johnny B. Badd. Hopefully, Austin will be getting his World title shot at some point (before Hulkamania runs wild). As for Pillman, let's see if he gets that TV or U.S. strap around his waist in the next 700 days. Vince won't be as absent-minded in 1996.

A quick anecdote. Barry and I were supposed to attend the April 26 Mets game together. He went to Florida while I took in the game. Paul E. Dangerously and Missy Hyatt appear in the second inning and sit in front of me, while I read the *Observer*. Now, isn't *that* something to make our esteemed editor kick himself with his good leg?!!

A KNEE TO THE GROIN!

"OH NO - NOT AGAIN! RON LEMIEUX QUILS SHEET BUSINESS, ETC!"

**By Butch Bigelow
(Formerly) Wrestling's Most Respected Columnist**

Man oh man, this whacky Lemieux character has quit the sheets more often than that despicable "Tragic" Magic Johnson has quit practicing safe sex and monogamy, quit basketball, quit the President's AIDS Commission, quit basketball again, quit coaching and quit telling the ugly truth about his shameful bi-personal life! I'll miss Ron's column but at the same time, I'm willing to bet that he'll be back before too long. His reasons for quitting were all a crock o' you-know-what, anyway. Even without his insider sources he still outscooped those other sheet goons on a regular basis, even if he had to make stuff up. I always admired him for that. He likes my top ten lists the best so here is one dedicated to him. What follows are the:

TOP 10 REASONS WHY LEMIEUX QUIT CHAIRSHOTS!

10. Cannot sit at his typewriter comfortably after his painful caning in Singapore for spray painting graffiti on Big Van Vader's ass.

9. Inspired during Wrestlemania X by his idol, ring announcer Howard Finkel, he has accepted a lucrative position as a toupee model for Cy Sperling's Hairclub for Men.

8. Since he began working in WCW as "Sir William", Lord Steven Regal has forbidden him from associating with lowlife peasants like us Chairshots guys.

7. Locked himself in his bathroom crying "This is SOOOOO corny! Why me, why me?! " after a jealous Pete Lederberg smacked him on the shin with a billy club just prior to Ron's guest ring announcing stint at the WCW Disney TV tapings.

6. Has abandoned his legendary, unparalleled wrestling journalism career to play a less-than-mediocre right field for a rag tag, class A, minor league baseball team in Tampa.

5. Had to go into seclusion after drunken rednecks repeatedly mistook him for a heavily hungover Lyle Lovett when attending matches in the SMW territory. "Hey Lovett, wherezat anorexic, gaping mouthed wife a yertz? You suck!"

4. Went into a deep depression after receiving an honorary lifetime membership in Dave Scherer's new Wade Keller Fan Club.

3. Was indicted for perjury after testifying before the Federal Grand Jury that Vince McMahon encouraged him to take mass quantities of steroids in 1990 in order to impress the broads at all the sleazy Lake Mary strip clubs.

2. Was arrested at a suburban Miami Taco Bell while trying to peddle a 55 gallon drum of lard that he found behind the free clinic after one of Roseanne's countless liposuction sessions.

1. Was shunned by his fellow columnists after saying the "F" word 14 times on the Letterman show.

What follows is a letter I received from some goof claiming to be Carlos Rey "The Crippler" Stevens (the same guy who wrote to the Observer, possibly?) which was marked "CONFIDENTIAL - FOR YOUR EYES ONLY, PLEASE!". Naturally, in the true spirit of responsible investigative journalism (just like NBC) I deemed it appropriate to reprint the letter here in its entirety for public scrutiny. Please refer all legal inquiries to my attorney, Mr. Bob Barnett of Laguna Del Rey, CA., whom I keep on retainer for Pulitzer Prize winning moments such as this.

Dear Mr. Bigelow:

As a concerned and responsible wrestling fan I feel obligated to relate to you details of a grand conspiracy I have uncovered under great threat to my personal safety. Since your reputation as a "most respected" journalist is beyond reproach, I feel that you are the only one I can trust. What follows is a point by point checklist of questionable indiscretions perpetrated by three renowned wrestling dignitaries.

Item 1: Barry X, formerly of Hallandale, FL, was just completing pigmentation treatments for his "A Tribute to Arsenio" Vegas lounge act when Hall's TV show was cancelled. Moved to New York City, lucked out by landing gravy job as head bus boy at Blimpies' on Staten Island. Slipped on a gimmicked banana peel during a Doink vs Iron Mike Sharpe dark match at Madison Square Garden. Had to limp all the way back to Florida. Hasn't been seen since.

Item 2: Jeff X of CA. - Once the editor of a popular comedy based sheet, Jeff X was forced to abandon his publishing career in order to devote all his free time to his nephew Jubie Jay X, who is currently in psycho-therapy for a chronic self-abuse problem. Uncle Jeff must accompany the troubled youngster at all times because when he is late for his masturbation sessions they start without him and he has a lot of trouble catching up, which leads to low self-esteem.

Item 3: Dr. Mike X, the Grapplin' Gynecologist - Not just a controversial wrestling photo-journalist, Dr. Mike's philanthropic tendencies are also well known within the business due to his penchant for eagerly performing weekly complimentary pap smears on Missy Hyatt.

THAT'S ALL THE PEOPLE CARE TO KNOW!

BUMPS & GRINDS

by Mike Terry

(Pro Wrestling's 34th Most Respected Columnist)

Here's a news flash for everyone salivating over WCW's Hogan-Flair series: don't set yourself up for disappointment. I can't believe so many "hardcores" are getting so psyched about this. Expect the worst, because that's probably what you'll get. Remember--these are the two who (for the most part) disappointed thousands of "hardcores" who anxiously awaited their WWF series. Why should this time be different? I predict the in-ring action should be slightly better than Flair's forgettable matches against El Gigante. I hope it pops a house for WCW, but frankly I don't see it. And how much is Brutus "The Leech" Beefcake making on the deal? Somebody please tell me that WCW refuses to use him. If he wrestles, it's a pure insult to the rest of WCW's wrestlers.

Lawlerpaloozers: to Alundra Blaze: "Tell me, how many Peeping Toms have you cured?"on Roddy Piper: "He's got that 7-11 mouth--it's open 24 hours a day!"on Chief Jay Strongbow: "I know his first job was parking covered wagons."to Helen Hart: "I know you're surprised to hear 'Happy Birthday' from someone other than Willard Scott.

Sorry there aren't as many good lines from the King as there might have been, but thanks to the WWF's lousy audio mixer-uppers, I couldn't even make out the commentary through a large part of a recent Superstars show. Can somebody explain to me why this happens? Is it just that some pinhead audio technician doesn't check his/her work? Does this happen in your city too? And how about WCW when the audioflubbers overdub cheers/boos during interviews that drown out the announcers as well as the interviewees.

Separated at birth: WCW rookie P.J. Walker and Jerry Seinfeld.

Brain Gems: with Schiavone on Bucksnot, Tennessee: BH: "That's where originally they were going to build Yale." TS: "The college?" BH: "No, the lock company."on Tanaka: "He knows judo, ju jitsu, he knows Mitsu Arakawa!"to Schiavone: "You know what they say, Tony. If you can't stand the heat in the kitchen, get carryout."

And more quotes: Johnny Polo on Sparky Plugg: "The 7-11 dream date" and "The Daytona drip."from Todd Pettingill on one of the Mania co-host candidates: "He's a couple McNuggets short of a Happy Meal."Todd on the egotistical I.R.S.: "He's livin' life in the key of 'me.'"

Names of the month: from All Star Wrestling Promotions: Young Lust and Helter Skelter.

Is there anyone who wouldn't rather hear Terry Taylor on commentary than Dusty Rhodes? And how about the way "big Dust" works "the crowd" on the Pro stand-ups?how about the signs in the crowd at Spring Stampede: "Who booked that?" & "Ears to ya, Cactus!" And Cactus--next time you take the Nestea plunge off the ring apron, I'll give you a dollar to fall on Michael Buffer.

I thoroughly enjoyed the Eric Bischoff interview in The Torch and Mr. Keller is certainly to be congratulated for hooking one of the big ones. One of the things Bischoff cited as a major accomplishment was his attention to continuity. Huh? The day before Spring Stampede on the Pro show, Bunkhouse Buck (well we wanted Stan Hansen, but he doesn't need to put up with our sorry asses, so we created our own) attacks Dustin Rhodes, repeatedly bashing Dustin's hand, apparently breaking it. Despite Schiavone's promise to talk "to someone" about it after commercial, Col. Parker was on the next interview and never mentioned the incident. Dustin ran him off, looking fresh as can be, and once more, never sold the hand or even mentioned this attack. That night on WCW Saturday Night--no cast on the hand, not even a mention. And what about the recent 2 1/2 hour show that began at 5:15 Eastern time--did they ever promote that? Yeah, that would be continuity, Eric.

One line from Keller that I must disagree with is his contention that Lawler is a better color commentator than Bobby Heenan. I certainly enjoy Lawler's work, but as a total package, my nod goes to the Brain. What about you?

Nickname of the month: Rick Rude to Gene Okerlund: "(you) mutant midget meathead!"

Yes, folks--people are just plain damn nuts. As Dennis Miller said recently on "The Late Show": "The world's gone mad. Michael Jackson and George Hamilton have officially crossed lines on the pigmentation flow chart."

That's it, gang! Take care of yourselves!

NEW ADDRESS!!
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Sucker Punch

BY BARRY ROSE



How many wrestlers actually get better with age? I'm not talking about a rookie maturing into a good worker, but rather a grizzled veteran, who after thirty years of countless bumps and injuries, is very possibly at the top of his game at this moment. Of course, I could only be speaking of Terry Funk. Through the magic of videotape (cliche-but I always wanted to say that), I've had a chance to catch some of the Funkster's latest exploits. What about that three man match in ECW with Shane Douglas and Sabu? One of the all time classics in my book. Funk's interview afterwards, with him crying, was awesome. How many fifty+ year olds are learning the moonsault? Credit Sabu with teaching him that. I was lucky to see Terry wrestle hundreds of times from the early seventies to the mid-eighties (including his December '75 world title victory over Jack Brisco in Miami Beach), and while he was certainly great then, he has, as "Diamond" Dave Scherer put it, the greatest US wrestler I have ever seen.

Lots of Missy Hyatt sightings around The Big Apple lately. I spotted a bleached out Missy at the April 12 Rangers game at the Garden, and even politely said hi. Ever the huge sports fan, she left after the second period of an enthralling game. Our own Jeff "I may be real famous soon and stop writing for this crummy rag" Cohen also had a chance to meet her at the Mets-Padres game on April 26. Missy's big date for the evening? None other than Paul E. Dangerously. Jeff relayed that nearly broke the concession stand that night with their constant ordering of such nutritional products as hot dogs, pretzels and ice cream. Still bulimic, Missy? Jeff also told of an amusing happening that evening. Two guys, after quaffing a few too many brewskis, went over to Hyatt and told her that they had a \$100 bet that she was the famous woman that they had seen on TBS, Missy Hyatt. She replied with "I'm sorry, my names Melissa Gilbert." Paul E. then retorts with "But, if you guys have \$25 she'll be Missy Hyatt for ya!" The one guy then says "She's not worth the money!" Missy visibly upset, replied, "Now I'm DEFINATLEY not Missy Hyatt!" And while on the subject of Missy and Paul E., reliable sources inform us that Titan is interested in bringing in both of them. Missy would be cast in a Minerva role and manage guys to face the Undertaker when he returns in June. Same sources say that they want to sign Paul E. to a three year contract, but he's interested in only a two year deal. Sounds kind of fishy to me.

Though the McMahon trial has been pushed back, the recent lawsuits and judgments against them really have to sting. Besides the Jesse Ventura decision of over \$800,000, the Chuck Austin victory of in excess of \$26,000,000 could be more devastating than Titan has ever had to face before. Though, no doubt, WWF lawyers will appeal the verdict, McMahon and Co. will come out on the losing end, no matter what. This has really been an interesting year for news thus far.

By now, you've seen the new address listed a couple of times and are all aware that I've returned back to the land of the living dead, FLORIDA! What could cause me to turn tail and migrate back to the state of perpetual rain? Was it the harsh, brutal end of winter that I faced? Was it the rough attitude of native NYC'ers? Was it those incessant, mind numbing "Nobody beat's the Wiz" ads? Unfortunately, nothing as simple as that. While running the bases in a softball game in Central Park (yes, THE Central Park) I did a little Ligation and Cartilage damage to my left knee and hip. Recovery time looks to be about six more weeks, and then, who knows! Until then, I'll remain financially and morally bankrupt in the south under the dutiful eyes of Dr. Bowdren, Dr. Goode, and Dr. Flaherty. See you guys in a couple of weeks, I'm outta here!!

7 MONTHS AGO IN CHAIRSHOTS

In an interview with Tom Nash, a member of the Blackhearts tag-team, Pete Lederberg tactfully relayed a CS reader's question regarding Tom's ex-partner and ex-wife (Luna Vachon): "Why did you let Dave Heath fuck your wife?" That question, along with it's response, prompted rumors of lawsuits, "shoot" challenges, and threatening, late night phone calls. 6 months after the Nash Q & A, The Wrestling Observer reported that the heat between the former teammates was directly attributed to the now infamous interview. Those in the know believe the heat was evident much earlier. Dave Scherer reported on the 9/18/93 ECW supershow and vociferously expressed his displeasure with the promotion hypocritically allowing a dealer to sell illegal video bootlegs at the event. "...a guy, who I will not name, was selling illegal bootleg wrestling videos from practically every promotion in the world. For those of you who miss the irony in all this, ECW has threatened many tape dealers with prosecution for selling their tapes, and yet they are sticking a knife in Jim Cornette's, et al, back by letting a dealer sell bootlegs of their stuff for, presumably, a piece of the action. Always remember, wrestling promoter=lowlife scumbag." Sid Vicious made his second appearance as a CS coverboy, and Jeff Bowdren had some harsh words for Mr. Eudy in his SHOOTKICK column. "What is ridiculous though is that this guy even has a job in this business. All the little weasels in Atlanta who hired, then (this is the good part folks) RE-HIRED him, should be standing in a soupline somewhere." 5 weeks later, following the scissors incident with Arn Anderson, someone followed Jeff's advice and canned the big slug, who hasn't stepped foot in a ring since.

HARDCORE

BY JOHN "THE TRUTH" HITCHCOCK #4



RUFUS R. "FREIGHT TRAIN" JONES. A LOT OF OLD GUYS WILL REMEMBER RUFUS. AND IN HIS PASSING I WILL LOOK BACK...



AT THE OLD GOOD OLD RUFUS WAS FIGHTING THE MISSOURI MARSH. MY OLDER BROTHER TOOK ME.



WATCHING THE SPECTACLE OF RUFUS WHIPPING THE MARSH. HE SAID, "I IMAGINE A BLACK MAN HITTING A WHITE MAN LIKE THAT TEN YEARS AGO."



HE WOULD HAVE BEEN LYNCHED NOT CHEERED BY THIS GROUP OF REDNECKS. HIS OBSERVATION WAS AMAZINGLY INSIGHTFUL.



REMEMBER BURRHEAD JONES? RUFUS AND HIS COUSIN?



ERNIE LADD AND HIS FEUD WITH RUFUS? GIVE ME \$2000 AND I WILL RESISTE YOU! AND AFTER BUDGETS RUFUS GOT UP THE CASH. LADD TOOK THE CASH AND SAID RUFUS R. JONES HUMANITARIAN OF THE YEAR!



BELL FLOP FINISH! 1-2-3!



THE CROWD IN GREENSBORO GAVE RUFUS A CROWN. AND I GUESS IN HIS OWN WAY TERRIBLE INTERVIEWS AND ALL HE WAS THE KING.



THANKS RUFUS! WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU! I LOVE THOSE RED CUP TANKS TOO!